CLAIMS

1.   A method for launching remote applications in a distributed test framework, comprising the operation of:

     launching a first application program having a call interface using a first agent

5   process having an agent launcher interface, wherein the call interface provides a reference

to the first agent process;

     sending a launch request from the first application to the agent launcher interface

using the reference to the first agent process, wherein the launch request specifies a

second application to be launched, and wherein the launch request defines attributes of a

10   processing resource; and

     launching the second application on a processing resource having the attributes

defined in the launch request.

2.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the second application is launched

15   by a second agent process executing on the processing resource.

3.   A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the second agent process is

registered with a look up service, the registering being configured to advertise the

attributes of the processing resource.

20

4.   A method as recited in claim 3, further comprising the operation of providing a system controller in communication with the first agent process and the second agent process.

5   5.   A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the system controller is configured to search the look up service to locate a processing resource having attributes substantially matching the attributes defined in the launch request.

6.   A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the call interface further includes
10   initialization parameters that provide initial values for an application.

7.   A method as recited in claim 6, wherein the agent launcher interface further includes initialization parameters that provide initial values for an application.

15   8.   A method as recited in claim 7, wherein the initialization parameters of the agent launcher interface can be passed to the call interface via the initialization parameters of the call interface.

9.   A system for launching remote applications in a distributed test
20   framework, comprising:

a first agent process executing on a first processing resource, wherein the first

agent process includes an agent launcher interface; and

a first application program having a call interface that provides a reference to the

first agent process, wherein the first application is capable of sending a launch request to

5   the agent launcher interface using the reference to the first agent process, the launch

request specifying a second application to be launched and defining attributes of a

processing resource.

10.   A system as recited in claim 9, wherein the second application is launched

10   on a second processing resource having the attributes defined in the launch request

11.   A system as recited in claim 10, wherein the second application is

launched by a second agent process executing on the second processing resource.

15   12.   A system as recited in claim 11, wherein the second agent process is

registered with a look up service, the registering being configured to advertise the

attributes of the processing resource.

13.   A system as recited in claim 12, further comprising a system controller in

20   communication with the first agent process and the second agent process.

14.   A system as recited in claim 13, wherein the system controller is configured to search the look up service to locate a processing resource having attributes substantially matching the attributes defined in the launch request.

5

15.   A system as recited in claim 14, wherein the call interface further includes initialization parameters that provide initial values for an application.

16.   A system as recited in claim 15, wherein the agent launcher interface
10   further includes initialization parameters that provide initial values for an application, wherein the initialization parameters of the agent launcher interface can be passed to the call interface via the initialization parameters of the call interface.

17.   A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for
15   launching remote applications in a distributed test framework, comprising:

a code segment that receives a reference to a first agent process, wherein the reference can be utilized to access the first agent process during execution;

a code segment that receives initialization parameters for an application, wherein the initialization parameters can be used to set initial values for specific parameters of the
20   application; and

a code segment that calls an agent launcher interface of the agent process using the reference, wherein a request to launch a second application is sent to the agent launcher interface, and wherein attributes of a processing resource are passed to the agent launcher process.

5

18.   A computer program as recited in claim 17, wherein the attributes are utilized to select a processing resource having substantially matching attributes to execute the second application.

10

19.   A computer program as recited in claim 18, wherein the processing resource is selected from a list of processing resources advertised on a look up service.

20.   A computer program as recited in claim 19, wherein the selected processing resource includes a second agent process, and wherein the second agent process launches the second application.

15